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PROPOSAL TO THE ACADEMIC SENATE

TITLE: General Education Policy – Parts I and II

SUBMITTED BY: Academic Policies Committee

DATE: October 31, 2003

ACTION: Legislative

REFERENCE:

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

DAYTON, OHIO

GENERAL EDUCATION POLICY**I. Purpose of the Policy**

The General Education component of the undergraduate curriculum is an investment in the personal development of students. Its purpose is to make students aware of the diversity of intellectual thought and theory represented by the sciences, the humanities, and the social sciences within the Catholic and Marianist traditions of education. In addition, the General Education component offers students an opportunity to integrate and evaluate information from various disciplines and thus enhance the study of a specific profession, field, or major.

The value of General Education depends on what is taught, how it is taught, and with what spirit. With this emphasis, General Education is also an investment in faculty development. It stimulates the faculty to develop integrated areas of study and to expand their knowledge beyond the scope of a particular discipline.

In order to complement all areas of study, the General Education component of the undergraduate curriculum must be a flexible yet integrated sequence of study within specified course areas. Oversight of the policy on General Education is the responsibility of the Academic Policies Committee of the Academic Senate. The Committee on General Education and Competencies oversees implementation and assessment of the program and is supported by a committee in each of the schools and the College. The objectives of such committees are to: (a) identify, solicit, and approve courses and clusters that will meet the General Education requirements; (b) monitor and evaluate all aspects of general education; (c) consider proposals for exceptions or alterations to the General Education policies; and (d) strive to inform, involve, and gain the support of the faculty.

II. Rationale and Goals

The importance of a flexible yet integrated General Education program at the University of Dayton has been identified and reaffirmed in many internal documents. They include the Kepes Task Force Report (1982-83), the Darr Committee Report (1982-83), the University's North Central Association Self-Study (1987, 1997), Report of the Committee on General Education to the Academic Senate (1988), General Education Program Review: Recommendations on Goals, Structure, and Administration (1988), the University's Mission Statement (1990), Statement on the Catholic and Marianist Identity (1990), Revised General Education Policy (1991), the Characteristics of Marianist Universities (1999), and *Vision 2005*.

In keeping with its Catholic and Marianist traditions, the University has identified its major educational purpose

as the full intellectual, cultural, social, moral, and spiritual development of undergraduates. A central component of General Education is the examination and understanding of the self in relation to others. Knowledge, aesthetic development, and critical reflection enrich this understanding.

The University's goal is to prepare students for a life of leadership, service, and life-long learning. The University pursues this goal by helping students acquire the knowledge, skills, intellectual curiosity, cultural awareness, and professional competence to become morally responsible decision makers who are aware of the needs of the global community and prepared to play an active role in meeting them. Originating in the Marianist ideal of family, the concept of community is important in defining education at the University. It characterizes education as an interpersonal process, a dialogue, in which persons search for truth and for meaning in genuine, open, and imaginative ways within a cooperative environment.

General Education reflects the need for students to become informed, responsible, literate and humane decision makers within a learning community and within society at large. As such, General Education courses provide students opportunities to appreciate the contributions of classmates; to understand the importance of experiencing success and failure in a supportive environment; to collaborate with peers in the pursuit of knowledge and a more just world. General Education seeks to encourage active learning in its many forms and pursues new models for learning that move beyond the traditional conceptualizations of teacher-centered and classroom-focused education. It seeks to create a community of learners for integrating knowledge and understanding of the human condition from the perspectives of many domains of knowledge; for the critical analysis of complementary and competing answers to questions about the human condition; for exploring and comparing the human experience within and across cultures and political boundaries; and as the first step in a life-long quest to interpret the past, understand the present, and imagine the future. General Education stands at the center of undergraduate education precisely because it raises fundamental questions that challenge students to reflect on the question, "What does it mean to be human?"

General Education also incorporates and advances the central purpose of the competency program, which aims to develop distinctive graduates who possess the critical reading, writing, oral communication, quantitative reasoning, and information literacy skills that students need to function in their academic, community, and professional lives.

General Education is designed so that students should:

1. Realize that they are members of a community of learners participating in inquiry about the most fundamental questions of humankind. Students should reflect in serious ways on such fundamental questions as: What does it mean to be human? What is the relationship between autonomy and responsibility? What is the relation between the individual and the community? How do faith and reason interact? What forms of human expression promote dialogue especially within context of pluralism and diversity? What social and political structures facilitate human growth? What is the relation of humans to the natural environment? General Education should prepare students for a life of leadership and service, helping them to grow not only in knowledge, skills, and professional competence, but also as moral decision makers who are aware of the needs of the global community.
2. Develop their ability to think critically and creatively Students should be able to collect facts and information, use criteria to judge their truth or importance, and exercise creativity in reflecting upon the relations among ideas, knowledge, and action.
3. Reflect on the mystery of a reality that can be approached through both faith and reason. In keeping with Catholic and Marianist identity of the University, students should reflect upon the meaning of the transcendent and appreciate the multifaceted manifestations of the human spirit. They should be able to reflect upon the relation of faith and reason.
4. Understand the ethical implications of human inquiry and discourse. In keeping with the University's emphasis on Catholic social teachings and its commitment to social justice as integral to a Catholic and Marianist education, students should reflect upon the ethical and moral dilemmas posed by significant

issues such as race, gender, violence, poverty, technology, and globalization. They should be able to apply ways of knowing and decision making to understand and make critical judgments on issues related to social justice in the United States and globally. Students should be able to clarify moral issues, identify consequences of decisions, articulate moral principles, and develop coherent moral arguments.

5. Be familiar with the principal domains of, or approaches to, knowledge as they contribute to an understanding of the person and the world. Students should be able to understand the humanities and arts as expressions of what it means to be human. They should be able to understand history as an examination of how tradition and past events have shaped cultures, institutions, and human identity. They should be able to understand the social sciences as explorations of the habits of humanity and the ways in which people live together, and the natural sciences as inquiries into the fundamental workings of the world. Within the context of these domains, they should be able to understand technology and the impact it has had upon history, society, and the environment. They should be able to understand the implications of globalization for cultures and societies, economics and the environment, and politics and international relations.
6. Develop an integrated view of knowledge. Students should be able to engage in connected learning and work across traditional disciplinary boundaries. They should learn to value interdisciplinary endeavors and work at the intersections of disciplinary knowledge. They should recognize the central importance of collaboration among teachers and students. These skills should connect learners within and beyond the campus and lead to deeper learning and greater levels of vocational preparation.
7. Develop an understanding of western civilization and its relation to other cultures To understand themselves and their world, students must examine the complex and diverse nature of their shared heritage. They should understand western civilization and its place in global society. They should value diversity and understand the intrinsic worth of non-western cultures and the dynamics of interaction among different cultural traditions.

III. Structure

To achieve these goals, the University has identified and reaffirmed the requirement of eleven courses which present the content and methodology of five domains of knowledge:

1. An educated person in our society should have a knowledge of history. With such a knowledge, we can relate ideas and events to one another within a context understood by the community of educated men and women. Therefore, every student at the University must take two history courses.
2. The physical and life sciences and technology have affected the quality of life in every age, but never more than in the present. The potential of science and technology for both good and evil will undoubtedly increase in the future. It is essential, therefore, that students understand the methods of science and its applications through technology. For these reasons students should take two courses in the physical and life sciences and technological applications.
3. As educated members of society we should understand the dynamics through which people relate to each other as individuals, in groups, and as producers and consumers of goods and services. Effective relationships sustain us as members of families, professions, nations, and the global community. Students, therefore, must take one course in the social sciences.
4. The experience of generations confirms that life is enriched immeasurably by experiencing the world through the arts. Every student should develop some understanding of the importance of this experience and must take one course in the arts and/or language as a means of aesthetic and /or cultural expression. Performing or production courses will not fulfill this requirement.
5. As a church-related institution of learning which seeks “to foster principles and values consonant with

Catholicism,” the University regards religious studies and philosophy as serving a special function. Students should have an opportunity to deepen their knowledge of the religious and philosophical traditions that shape their shared heritage. Study of these areas, especially when conducted through interdisciplinary courses, can also help students integrate their knowledge of the themes and institutions of societies through the ages. The review by the Academic Policies Committee reaffirms this statement. Since every student should be encouraged to go beyond the introductory level in either or both of these areas, every student must take four courses in religious studies/philosophy.

Evaluations of General Education have consistently emphasized integration of the content and methodology of various domains. Therefore, in addition to the five domains listed above, every student for whom English composition is a requirement will take one compositions course in which assignments will be designed to complement material covered in other introductory General Education courses (i. e., the Humanities Base).

In order to achieve the goals of raising fundamental questions about human existence, encountering questions in a meaningful context, and encouraging significant integration, students will be required to take:

1. Four of the eleven courses as part of a Base
2. At least three courses from a minimum of three domains as part of a thematic cluster (If a cluster includes both a philosophy and a religious studies course, it needs to have only one additional course from only one other domain.)
3. Any remaining courses (i. e., a maximum of four) from the list of approved General Education courses within the appropriate domains.

THE HUMANITIES BASE

General Education raises a set of questions that challenges students to develop and formulate their own conception of what it means to be human. These questions may be considered in any discipline, but they are central to the humanities. It is in humanities courses that one encounters the historical circumstances in which these questions were initially raised or perceived to be meaningful, the basic premises out of which such discussions developed, the rules of discourse for examining issues, and the terminology used in conducting such discourse. It is this context that is essential if students are to engage in meaningful dialogue about their own answers to such questions. Furthermore, if students are to be encouraged to begin the sometime lifelong pursuit of an integrated personal vision of what it means to be human, they must understand that the humanities disciplines ultimately constitute an integrated pursuit of the same goals. Consequently, the University has established an integrated Humanities Base for its General Education program which requires students to take one Philosophy course, one Religious Studies course, one Western Civilization course, and one English composition/Literature course.

To make this experience a true integrating base, the faculties of the departments offering these courses should select some fundamental questions or issues to be considered in these courses, common readings, and common assignments. They are encouraged to consider and develop ways of integrating these courses, especially any that illuminate the relation between faith and reason.

THEMATIC CLUSTERS

To facilitate an integrated view of knowledge, to enhance the students’ familiarity with the domains of knowledge, and to achieve the other General Education goals, faculty should identify and/or develop thematic clusters of courses that build on the Humanities Base. Thematic clusters are courses that when grouped together provide a focus on fundamental human questions which is richer and broader than that provided by individual courses. Each cluster will consist of at least three courses selected from a minimum of three of the following domains:

1. Two courses in the physical and life sciences.

2. One social science course.
3. One course which explores the use of the arts and/or language as a means of aesthetic and/or cultural expression.
4. One history course
5. Two philosophy/religious studies courses.

A cluster may contain as few as three or as many as five of the domains listed above. In many cases, because its subject matter and structure entail pluralistic approaches to multifaceted issues, a single course may be approved for several different thematic clusters. Conversely, a number of courses within a given domain may be equally acceptable for meeting one of the requirements within a cluster.

COMPLETING GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Theoretically, a four-course base and a seven-course cluster could fulfill all the requirements listed in this document under "Structure." Usually, however, a student will have to complete some domain requirements not covered in a specific cluster. A student fulfilling a General Education requirement that is not part of the Base or part of his or her particular cluster, may, with the advisor's approval, elect any approved General Education course within the appropriate domain.

Although all courses approved for General Education must conform to the general goals listed in this document, those approved for clusters benefit from being encountered in the context of related courses. It is particularly important therefore, that courses that are not part of a cluster be reviewed carefully before approval. These courses must provide students with a basic understanding of the methodology and content of the domains of human inquiry. Because a student will seldom take more than two courses in a given domain of inquiry, approval should be limited to those courses that conform to our best professional judgments of what a broadly educated college graduate should know about the domains of inquiry.

IV. Implementation

To implement the Humanities Base and clusters will require resources, time, and commitment, especially because it will demand cooperation across departments. A necessary condition for the creation of an integrated Base and clusters is the development of a faculty who are conversant with the concept of integrated education. Therefore, in the academic year following the approval of this policy by the Academic Senate, selected faculty from the departments of English, History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies should work together to learn about and develop the integrated Humanities Base. They should develop sample syllabi, select common readings, topics, assignments, and other devices that will facilitate integration. Selected faculty from the various departments in the College and the schools should develop thematic clusters so that several clusters are available to our students within two years following the adoption of this policy. In this way the program can be implemented gradually during the three to four years following the approval of this policy.

THEMATIC CLUSTERS

Initial proposals for thematic clusters may come from the schools or the three major divisions of the College, from interdisciplinary teams of faculty, or from individual departments. Themes already identified as possibly appropriate for a General Education cluster include: leadership, pluralism, and human values; technology and human purposes; Catholic intellectual life; global visions; and discovery and creativity. Whichever themes are developed, they must enable students to achieve the General Education goals.

The preliminary proposal for a thematic cluster must contain the following: (1) title of the theme, (2) an explanation of, or rationale for, the theme, (3) a listing of the courses or types of courses, which could achieve the goals of the theme within the structure of the General Education program, (5) a list of the schools, departments, and programs endorsing the cluster, (6) a list of names and departments of faculty who developed the proposal, (7) an indication of the resources necessary for offering the cluster.

The themes will provide the direction for the selection and/or development of the courses. Courses will be selected and/or developed from three or more of the domains (with the exception noted above): History, Philosophy/Religious Studies, Social Sciences, Science, and Language or Arts as Aesthetic and/or Cultural Expression. The departments that constitute each domain will have the primary responsibility for selecting and/or developing the General Education courses within their domains. These departments should negotiate with the schools, divisions, teams, departments, and appropriate committees to identify the courses that are compatible with the themes. The process needs to be open so that faculty members, department chairs, and deans who have an interest are directly involved.

After the thematic clusters and the General Education courses have been approved by the University Committee on General Education, the College, schools, and/or departments will have the responsibility of identifying which of the approved thematic clusters and General Education courses are appropriate for, and available to, their students. They will have the responsibility of advising their students about the General Education program.

V. Administration

The General Education Committees of each school and College, the University Committee on General Education and Competencies, the Office of the Provost represented by an Associate Provost, and the College of Arts and Sciences represented by an Associate Dean are responsible for facilitating, reviewing, approving, and evaluating the General Education Program. Working in concert, they are charged with assuring the integrity and quality of the General Education Program. Each of the Deans has the responsibility of granting exceptions to students *transferring* into his or her academic division.

SCHOOL/COLLEGE GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEES

The College and the Schools should each establish committees on General Education or specify a committee to assume general education responsibilities. The size, composition, and selection procedure of each of these committees will be determined by, and based on, the needs of each of these academic divisions. The responsibilities of these Committees shall be the following:

1. Propose and/or review preliminary proposals for thematic clusters. If the Committee judges that a proposal meets the purposes of General Education and that it would be an appropriate thematic cluster for students in that division, the Committee will submit the preliminary proposal to the University Committee on General Education and Competencies. If it does not reach this judgment, the Committee will return the proposal to the appropriate faculty group with an explanation of its decision.
2. Periodically review approved thematic clusters relative to their appropriateness for students in that academic division.
3. Recommend policies and procedures relative to general education.
4. Through communication with faculty and students in that academic division, facilitate an understanding of, and appreciation for, the General Education Program.

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL EDUCATION AND COMPETENCIES

The Committee on General Education and Competencies will be a standing subcommittee of the Academic Policies Committee of the Academic Senate. The Executive Committee of the Academic Senate will appoint the members of the Committee on General Education and Competencies. Membership on the Committee must be a representative cross-section of the various components of the University: The College of Arts and Sciences and the

professional Schools as well as faculty, students, and administrators.

The Committee will be composed of a minimum of eight (8) members plus three *ex officio* members: an Associate Provost; an Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences; and the Registrar or designate. Membership shall be designated as follows:

1. Three faculty members: one each from the three professional schools of Business Administration, Education and Allied Professions, and Engineering.
2. Three faculty members from the College of Arts and Sciences with one each from the humanities, the social sciences, and the sciences.
3. Two student members from the Academic Policies Committee, or from the General Education Committees of the Schools or College, or from the Academic Senate.
4. At least three of the eight members must come from the Academic Senate, preferably from the Academic Policies Committee. At least one member must come from the Academic Policies Committee.
5. Each undergraduate dean has the option to serve or to appoint a designate as an *ex officio* member.
6. The Chairperson of the Competency Implementation Subcommittee is also a voting member of the University Committee on General Education and Competencies until at least July 1, 2005, at which time the subcommittee is scheduled to cease to exist.

All the members with the exception of the students shall have a three-year term of office. Student members shall have a one-year term of office, but may be reappointed by the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate.

The responsibilities of the University Committee on General Education and Competencies shall be as follows:

1. Approve courses that form the Humanities Base
2. Review preliminary proposals for thematic clusters submitted by the Schools or the College General Education Committees. If the Committee judges that a proposal meets the purposes of General Education and that the proposal appears feasible in terms of staffing and other resources, it shall refer the proposal to the Associate Dean and to the appropriate departments which will have primary responsibility for offering the courses in the cluster. If it does not reach this judgment, the Committee shall return the preliminary proposal to the appropriate School or College General Education Committee with an explanation of its decision.
3. Facilitate communication and collaboration among faculty proposing thematic clusters and the departments offering courses that will be part of those clusters.
4. Review final proposals for thematic clusters, which shall include the seven components of the preliminary proposal as well as the syllabi of the courses selected and /or developed by the appropriate departments offering the General Education courses. If the Committee judges that the final proposal meets the purposes of General Education and approves the courses as part of the cluster, it shall provide the proposal to the Associate Dean for purposes of implementation. If the Committee does not reach this judgment, it will return the proposal to the appropriate committee and departments with an explanation of its decision.
5. Approve courses included in a thematic cluster that also satisfy General Education requirements in specified domains of knowledge outside the format of the clusters.
6. Approve as fulfilling General Education requirements all courses in the appropriate domains of

knowledge that are neither part of the Humanities Base nor in a thematic cluster, but have been approved by the Schools or the College.

7. Instruct the Associate Dean to identify and promulgate, at least once a year, courses offered by the various units of the University that will meet the General Education requirements.
8. Keep a file of documents for approved courses in General Education under the auspices of the Associate Dean.
9. With the assistance of the Associate Dean, monitor and evaluate course offerings to insure that the General Education requirements in the Humanities Base, the thematic clusters, and the domains of knowledge can be satisfied by students in a timely and systematic fashion.
10. Consider course proposals that would satisfy more than one General Education goal or would be less than the normal three credit offering for specific programs as long as the goals of General Education would be served adequately.
11. With the assistance of the Associate Provost and the Associate Dean, conduct evaluations of the General Education Program and make recommendations to the Academic Policies Committee of the Academic Senate for strengthening the General Education Program. A thorough and systematic evaluation of the Program must be conducted every five years to assess the extent to which students are achieving the specified goals.
12. In cooperation with the standing Competency Implementation Subcommittee, oversee the general competencies. Before July 1, 2005, the Committee on General Education and Competencies must recommend continuation of the Subcommittee or submit a recommendation to the Academic Policies Committee for appropriate ongoing oversight and support of the competencies program.

The Committee shall select its chairperson at the first organizational meeting each year. The Committee shall develop its own procedures for performing its duties and such procedures shall be submitted to the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate for its approval.

ASSOCIATE PROVOST

An Associate Provost will be appointed by the Provost and will be responsible for assuring that the General Education policy is implemented by the Committee on General Education and Competencies and the Associate Dean and for facilitating University-wide conversations concerning the integral role of General Education to the University's mission. The Associate Provost will:

1. Assure that the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate appoints the University Committee on General Education and Competencies in a timely manner each year and communicate those appointments to the Associate Dean.
2. Serve as the Provost's representative (*ex officio*) on the University Committee on General Education and Competencies.
3. Assure that the Schools and the College appoint the appropriate committees on General Education.
4. Work with the Associate Dean to implement procedures for effective assessment, review, and evaluation of the General Education Program by assuring that assessment and reviews are conducted in a manner consistent with established University policy.
5. Work with the Associate Dean to identify and pursue possible outside funding sources for the General

Education Program.

6. In consultation with the Committee on General Education and Competencies and the Associate Dean, facilitate an ongoing discussion among administrators, faculty, and students concerning the role of General Education in the mission and vision of the University.

ASSOCIATE DEAN

An Associate Dean will be appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and will be responsible for the administration of all aspects of the implementation of all approved elements of the General Education Program. The Associate Dean will:

1. Convene the first meeting each year of the University Committee on General Education and Competencies and assure that the Committee selects its chairperson.
2. Maintain the records of the University Committee on General Education and Competencies and provide necessary administrative support services.
3. Communicate the decisions and recommendations of the University Committee on General Education and Competencies to the University, especially to those most directly affected.
4. Facilitate the development, implementation, and assessment of the Humanities Base, the Thematic Clusters, and other General Education courses.
5. Develop a program for training all faculty who have responsibility for advising students regarding General Education requirements.
6. Develop and distribute in a timely manner current and correct information on the structure, policies, and procedures of the General Education Program as well as on all approved courses.
7. Through multiple means of communication facilitate campus-wide understanding of, and appreciation for, the General Education Program.
8. Work with the Associate Provost to implement procedures for effective assessment, review, and evaluation of the General Education Program. The Associate Dean is responsible for implementing assessment and for reporting the results of that assessment to the various constituencies including the Committee on General Education and Competencies and the University Assessment Committee.
9. Work with the Associate Provost to identify and pursue possible outside funding sources for the General Education Program.

Parts I and II: approved by the Academic Senate (October 2003—pending)

Parts III, and IV: approved by the Academic Senate, April 1991

Part V: approved by the Academic Senate, April 2002